

[P. 192 b] Chuckchusi

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medicine. A shaman's help was never sought for abortion.

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Some women had a child every year. Of twelve or thirteen births only "one, maybe six, maybe nine" would live to become adults. Some 165 died in infancy, a disaster blamed on evil shamans.

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There were few cases of sterility: "most people who married had children; some didn't."

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Birth took place in the dwelling, not in a special structure, said N.W. Normally, the woman's mother and sister or an aunt helped her; her mother-in-law might also do so. No men nor childless women were allowed in a house where a birth was taking place. [The birth procedure was not described.]

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If parturition was difficult, scrapings from a bear's claw were put in water for the woman to drink, and the decoction was also rubbed on her head and hands. N.W. said this was "better than a doctor." It was a common practice; the scrapings might be got at any time from someone who had killed a bear and would then be kept on hand for use as needed. J.R. said that when a bear was killed some man, not a shaman, would get a claw. He would keep it, hang it up to dry, until it was needed to help some woman in childbirth. If labor was unduly delayed, the claw would be got, scraped into a basket of water. The parturient drank this decoction, and immediately the baby came. It was thought that the bear-claw drink so frightened the infant that it came out at once. This medicine was never used for any other purpose.

Another method to help difficult labor was to hold scorched whippoorwill feathers (wul'wul, whippoorwill) under the woman's nose.¹¹⁹

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The baby was bathed at once in wormwood water. The first cradle was not ready, but was started as soon as the paternal grandmother got the baby's size. The cradle-making took about three days. The umbilical cord was buried.¹²⁰

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Naming.—"It was one year or so, sometimes longer, before a young couple had their first baby. There were more children then [in old times] than now," said N.W. Neither sex was preferred.

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The infant was named shortly after birth, according to N.W., and kept that name throughout life. The paternal grandmother usually selected the name, which would be one from the father's side of the family. If the person for

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¹¹⁹The bird, later identified as whippoorwill, was described as follows. "It is a brown bird a little smaller than a pigeon, but with a big mouth. The color is like dirt; you don't see it. It swallowed a deer once. It is speckled white, just a little. It has short legs. When it flies it makes a noise like wul-will (w44). It doesn't make a whirring noise with its wings when it starts to fly but is silent like other birds. It flies in the evening, not much in the day. It has black legs and beak. It stands 5 inches or so tall."

¹²⁰Kroeber, Handbook, 499.